



Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

**DRAFT MINUTES
COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Annual Members Meeting
Tuesday, April 30, 2024
The Greenport 158 Union Turnpike, Hudson, NY 12534**

Please take notice that the Columbia Economic Development Corporation will hold its annual meeting on April 30, 2024 with registration beginning at 7:30am at The Greenport, 158 Union Turnpike, NY 12534, for the purpose of discussing any matters that may be presented to the Corporation for consideration.

List of attendees is attached.

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 a.m. by James Calvin, Board Chair. He welcomed the attendees to the 2024 CEDC Annual Meeting. Mr. Calvin thanked The Greenport for hosting the event and Chef Danyell Ray for providing the food. He recognized Tech Audio Video and the meeting sponsors. He then introduced Columbia County Chair of the Board of Supervisors, Matt Murell. Chairman Murell thanked CEDC for their over 30 years of assistance to Columbia County. He reviewed the past year for the attendees, noting the creation of a Land Bank, the award of the grant for accessory dwelling units and the other work being done on affordable housing by CEDC, thanking Chris Brown for his efforts. He updated the attendees on the continuing work on Broadband throughout the County. Chairman Murell informed the group a \$300,000 Microenterprise grant had been awarded to Columbia County to assist businesses with 5 or fewer employees, with grants and loans. He thanked Mr. Calvin, David Fingar, Mike Tucker and the Board and Staff of CEDC for their work.

Mayor Kamal Johnson stated over the past 5 years the City and CEDC have worked together on several important projects, including a housing project, which broke ground earlier this year, as well as grants program for women and minority businesses. He thanked everyone for their work in the City of Hudson.

Joseph Landy, Economic Development Specialist from Empire State Development thanked Columbia County CEDC and Mike Tucker. He noted that CEDC and the County “punched above their weight”. He asked those interested in applying for NYS Grants to contact Mr. Tucker and he would contact NYS.

Jean Claude Bruneau General Manager of Hudson Valley Creamery noted the business had a good year last year. He noted the difficulty in hiring employees, partially due to transportation. He noted there was also insufficient goat milk in the United States to keep up with demand. He noted the company is required to import curd from their plants in Europe in order to provide sufficient product, which impacts the cost of the U.S. product. He stated he had provided the cheese for the breakfast, and hoped the attendees would enjoy the product.

Martha Lane introduced the Keynote speaker, Daniel Rickman the District Director of the Syracuse – Upstate New York District Office of the Small Business Administration (SBA). Mr. Rickman reviewed the recent history of the SBA from the impact of COVID to the present. He noted small businesses employed 40% of the workforce with two thirds of the growth. He stated small businesses were responsible for 17 million new business applications, 15 million new jobs and net new 3 million more businesses since the pandemic. He reviewed the challenges facing small businesses.

Mr. Rickman reviewed the Microloan program, noting the statistics cited in the annual report of CEDC loaning over \$5.1 million over the period 2015 – 2023, benefiting over 200 businesses. He noted that CEDC had a small coverage area compared to others in the same district yet was the top lender in the past period. He encouraged the attendees to share the information about the program.

Mr. Calvin thanked Mr. Rickman and recognized several attendees including: Alex Horton, Field Representative of Congressman Marc Molinaro; Chief of Staff Morgan Weinberg Scheduler Daniel Wrenn from Senator Hinchey's office; and Gunnar Wordon, Assemblymember Barrett's Chief of Staff. Mr. Calvin also recognized PJ Keeler, Columbia County Treasurer, Stuyvesant Town Supervisor, Ron Knott, Ghent Town Supervisor Craig Simmons, Town of Copake Supervisor Richard Wolf, President of Columbia Greene Community College Dr. Carlee Drummer, President of the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce William Gerlach; President of the Hudson Development Corporation Christine Jones, President /CEO Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress Adam Bosch, Director of Workforce Development Board Chris Nardone, Deputy Mayor of Philmont Douglas Cropper, Executive Vice President of Empire State Development Ed Hamilton and President Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, Peter Taylor.

Mr. Calvin introduced the attending Board members and the staff to the attendees. He thanked the three outgoing members of the Board: Ruth Adams, Sarah Sterling and David Fingar. He noted Ruth and Sarah were unable to attend the event. Mr. Calvin thanked Mr. Fingar and presented him with a token of appreciation for his service. Mr. Fingar thanked the attendees and Board.

Mr. Tucker gave an overview of 2023 and the projects CEDC worked on. He thanked the Board, staff and the Board of Supervisors for their support. He stated in the past year, 12 Columbia County businesses had received \$5.7 million in NYS Funding through the CFA process. He reviewed several past projects and informed the attendees since 2012, 138 Columbia County projects had been awarded over \$52 million through the Regional Council Initiative. He acknowledged the importance of regional partnerships. He gave an update on the broadband progress. He referenced the work with arts and tourism, affordable housing climate change efforts and child care issues. He referenced the diversity of the business community and the partnerships CEDC maintained with businesses and organizations in all sectors. He thanked CEDC's outgoing board members Ruth Adams, Sarah Sterling and David Fingar. He thanked the members, board, current board chair James Calvin, sponsors.

Mr. Tucker asked Martha Lane to give an overview of CEDC's Microbusiness programs. She noted in 2023 CEDC made 42 loans totaling over \$1 million, noting the current value of the portfolio is \$4.5 million. 130 entrepreneurs were assisted in the past year with technical assistance and this year's technical assistance grant from the SBA totaled \$261,000. The annual Microbusiness Seminar Series has 19 enrolled. The Columbia Forward program was allocated \$500,000 in ARPA funds to foster economic activity in the County in 2022. She outlined the goals and partners of the program. She stated \$50,000 was allocated by Columbia County to be used for grants for qualifying businesses. To date \$260,000 has been loaned and \$36,000 has been granted to eligible small businesses.

Ms. Lane informed the attendees that 13 businesses have applied for funding through the \$300,000 NYS CDBG Microenterprise grant program and CEDC was working with the grant committee to review and award the grants. Ms. Lane thanked the SBA, NYS Office of Community Renewal and the Columbia County Board of Supervisors. She thanked Mr. Fingar for his support of the past several years.

Chris Brown, Affordable Housing Coordinator for CEDC stated Columbia County has received the certification to create a County land bank after receiving NYS approval earlier in the year. He stated the land bank would be set up to receive donations of properties from foreclosures. He stated an accessory dwelling grant had been released. He thanked Kelly Baccaro at Columbia County for her work on the grant. He also thanked Ron Knott, Supervisor of Stuyvesant and Brenda Adams, Supervisor of Canaan, co-chairs of the Housing Task Force for their work on passing the resolution authorizing the submission. He thanked Adam Bosch from Patterns for Progress, for his assistance and information.



Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

Mr. Brown noted the NYS budget this year had included \$650 million of housing grant funds in the NYS budget. He noted in order to be eligible for funds you need to have a Pro-Housing Communities Designation. He stated as of that morning, Columbia County had more communities who have submitted all the required documents required to get the designation than any other county in NYS. He asked any Mayor or Supervisor who have not submitted documentation to please contact him for assistance. He noted partnerships were vital to this undertaking.

Mr. Calvin called the business meeting to order at 9:02am. He called for a motion to accept the minutes from the 2023 annual meeting held on April 23, 2023. *David Fingar made a motion, seconded by Michael Johnston to approve the minutes as presented. Carried.*

Mr. Calvin turned the meeting over to CEDC Treasurer, Tarah Gay. Ms. Gay presented the annual audit noting the auditors had an unmodified report. She reviewed the statement of net position with the attendees. She directed the attendees' attention to the annual report and the CEDC website which contain further details.

Mr. Calvin introduced CEDC attorney, Andrew Howard, CEDC attorney to present the proposed bylaw changes to the membership. Mr. Howard stated the major changes to the document were: Adding the Executive Director of the Columbia-Greene Workforce Development Board as an ex-officio member of the CEDC Board of Directors; split the Audit and Finance Committee into two separate committees in accordance with the NYS ABO requirements; more accurately reflect the updated Public Officers Law allowing for video conferencing; bring consistency to the committee charter language and to bring consistency to the manner in which the Board of Directors and officers are elected at the end of the year. Mr. Howard asked for a motion and a second to approve the proposed changes. *Michael Johnston made a motion, seconded by Rachel Puckett to approve the proposed by-law changes as presented. Carried.*

Mr. Calvin asked Governance and Nominating Committee Chair Rachel Levine to present the slate of directors to the Members. Ms. Levine presented the following slate of directors to be elected to a full 3 year term to expire on May 1, 2027: Tarah Gay – Public Sale! Auction, Derek Grout – Harvest Spirits, Christian Lopez – Coyote Flaco, Richard Nesbitt – Johnny Walker Insurance, Sean Sawyer – Olana Partnership.

She presented a slate of directors to be elected to complete a partial term ending May 1, 2026: Rachel Puckett - Mid-Hudson Cablevision, Justin Goldman – The Bank of Greene County.

She presented a slate of directors to be elected to complete a partial term ending May 1, 2025: Kenneth Leggett. She called for a motion to accept the slates of directors as presented. *David Fingar made a motion, seconded by Michael Molinski to approve the slates as presented. Carried.*

Mr. Calvin asked if there was any further business to come before the Members. With no response he asked that the minutes reflect that CEDC is blessed with an outstanding Board and an outstanding Staff, outstanding partners and outstanding members. On behalf of CEDC he expressed sincere thanks for their support. He called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. *Rick Cummings made a motion, seconded by Michael Johnston to adjourn the meeting. Carried.* The meeting adjourned at 9:12 am, with no further business to come before the Members.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Drahusiak,